

CASTE IN INDIA.

Curious Social Distinctions It Imposes Upon the Natives.

Caste in India is a really curious institution, and it is as inflexible as it is curious. There is no real bond of unity between the heterogeneous races that inhabit the vast peninsula. Differences of race and language, of religion and tradition, arrest the growth of unity. Separatist tendencies are encouraged by the system. In his book, "Studies of Indian Life and Sentiment," Sir Bampfylde Fuller writes:

"Every walk of life is occupied by a caste or castes of its own, which may not marry with nor even eat with other castes. No one can, for instance, be a weaver, a carpenter, a barber or even a scavenger unless he is born one, unless his parents belong to a caste that has appropriated this or the other means of livelihood, nor is each caste of occupation general throughout the country. Each province has a separate gradation of its own. To the carpenters of Calcutta, for instance, the carpenters of Madras are strangers, between whom intermarriage would be an unthinkable impossibility. The one caste that pervades the whole of India is the Brahman, and this is subdivided into numberless sections, between whom there can be no marriage alliance."

"A case came to official notice in Madras where the village postmaster, being a Hindu, would not allow pariahs to come to his postoffice. They had to throw their letters down at the end of the street and leave them to be collected there. On the west coast a coolie meeting a Brahman on the road has to step aside some distance into the field lest the air passing him should offend the other's nobility."

"Addressing a superior, a low caste man will hold his hand across his mouth to prevent any contamination by his breath. Even indirect contact is polluting, and I have known a Brahman clerk charged with the distribution of leases to low caste tenants to throw the papers on the ground for the latter to pick up as best they could."

The Versatile Farmer.

As a matter of fact, the farmer is one of the very few men who are qualified to be called "all round men." His roofless workshop is at a distance from communities of any considerable size; hence he naturally and almost insensibly becomes a master, in part at least, of practically all the trades and professions, not because he is miserly or lacking in funds, but because he must grapple with things at first hand.

He becomes perforce a bricklayer, carpenter, plumber, butcher, sheep herder, swineherd, hunter, veterinary surgeon, dentist, well driller, bacteriologist, entomologist, meteorologist, horticulturist, agriculturist, pomologist and at times minister, tinsmith, watchmaker, harnessmaker, banker, doctor, lawyer and even on occasion an undertaker.—Craftsman.

Ancient Water Thieves.

Water thieves are not unique. Their prototypes existed at least as long ago as 1479. At that time a Londoner wrote: "This yere a wax chandler in Flete strete had bi craft perced a pipe of the conduit withinne the grounde, and so conveyed the water into his selar; wherefor he was jugid to ride through the Citee with a condit upon his hedde." There were other difficulties too. A century later (1574) it is recorded that owing to a sudden shower of rain the water in the Dowgate channel "had such a swift course that a lad, minding to have leapt over it, was taken by the feet and borne down with the violence of that narrow stream till he came against a cart wheel that stood in the water gate, before which time he was drowned and stark dead."

How It Happened.

He stumbled on a piano and ever after lived in the belief that he had the key to the musical situation. He had a row with the town fiddler, who struck him on the head with a banjo, and then he hired a hall and put up a sign, "Dancing Lessons Taught Here." Passing a temple of justice, a lawbook fell out of a window and crushed his beaver in, whereupon he believed that he had law on the brain, and he fitted up an office and lived and died in the belief.—Uncle Remus' Magazine.

A Painless Death.

A teacher in the factory district of a New Jersey town had been giving the children earnest lectures upon the poisonousness of dirt. One morning a little girl raised her hand excitedly and pointed to a boy who seldom had clean hands. "Teacher," she said, "look quick! Jimmy's committin' suicide! He's suckin' his thumb."—Success Magazine.

INN NAMES IN ENGLAND.

They Can't Be Changed at the Mere Whim of the Innkeeper.

Our British cousins evince curious and contradictory ideas with reference to proper names. Officially they exhibit all their national conservatism touching the retention of names in some circumstances; individually they indulge in all manner of license in the bestowal of names upon their offspring.

England is one of the freest countries in the world, a country where the rights of individuals are safeguarded in the fullest measure, yet in some details those rights are curiously curtailed. Once an innkeeper of South Hants wished to alter the name of his establishment from the Duke of York to the Panther. In this country the method would be to take down the old sign and hang up a new one, but there the case was different.

The distinguished naval officer who acted as chairman of the authoritative committee demanded the reason for so sudden and violent a change. He was informed that the applicant owned another inn named the Duke of York in a neighboring town and that the identity of names caused some confusion in business.

This would seem to be a satisfactory excuse, but the chairman held that it was discourtesy to the Duke of York to supersede him by a brute. The application was refused.

The host of the Alma, a metropolitan inn, wished to take advantage of a passing wave of popular interest and to call his hostelry the Fashoda. Out of regard for French sensibility permission was curtly refused.

A similar fate befell the request to change the name of another inn from the Royal Oak to the Radstock. In this case the chairman of the committee took the ground that Lord Radstock, as an eminent philanthropist and a Christian man, might object to the use of his name for a house in which liquor was sold. This argument carried the day. Thus the same authority held it to be discourteous to a philanthropic nobleman to give his name to a "licensed house" and discourteous to the heir to the throne to remove his name from a licensed house.—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Tip For the Angler.

There had been an incessant downpour of rain from the early hours of the morning, and still the angler sat on the bank of the river. Doubtless he was fishing for his tea, but success did not attend his efforts, and his only consolation was a small eel about the size of a worm.

Suddenly a drenched urchin made his appearance. "Caught much?" asked the boy.

"Can't you see," impatiently replied the angler.

"Yer'll catch nothing there, mister." No reply. After a slight pause, "I know where you can catch some, though."

"Where?" eagerly inquired the ardent angler.

"Under the bridge," replied the boy.

"How do you know?"

"'Cause they allus go there to keep out of the rain."

The angler got up to stretch himself, and the youth made a hasty retreat.—London Ideas.

A Fisherman's Proposal.

"My love," whispered an ardent angler, "you hold first 'plaice' in my heart! Although I 'flounder' about in expressing myself, my 'sole' wish is that you will save me from becoming a 'crabbed' old bachelor. I shall stick to you closer than a 'limpet' from you a 'wink' I'll be the road to guide me. Together we will 'skate' over life's 'rocks,' and when I look at your hand beside me I shall say to myself, 'Fortune was mine when I put 'herring' there!'" The lady lowered her eyes in sweet confusion and murmured, "Pass the salt!"—London Mail.

Most Peculiar.

Canvasser—Are you single? Man at the Door—Yes. "Why, the people next door told me you were married." "So I am." "Yet you told me just now you were single." "Yes; so I did." "Well, what is the matter with you?" "Nothing, sir. My name is Single and I'm married. Good day, sir."

Not For Good.

There are many reasons for a girl's giving up office work, but one mentioned by a writer in Brooklyn Life in the following story is perhaps the most effective that could be invented. "Miss Smith is going away," said one of the stenographers to another. "Is she leaving for good?" "No, not for good; for better or for worse."

PERCIVAL CAME BACK.

He Shed His Name and Later Haughtily Returned to It.

Percival didn't like his name, and neither did Percival's father, but Percival's mother had a say-so in the matter, and that ended it.

Percival wished, now that he was twenty years of age and a rising young bank clerk—or one who wanted to rise, at least—that he had been named George or Henry, these names being far more dignified and substantial as to sound.

Percival's father wished that Percival had been named Alexander junior, but he did not voice this aloud, and nobody at the time Percival had been named seemed to think how appropriate it would have been to name him Percival Alexander, Jr.

Thus things had rocked along for twenty years, during which Percival had been the butt and mockery of his fellows. He had been cured of parting his hair in the middle and of smoking cigarettes, and now, a fairly steady youth, he had almost reached man's estate with this unhappy name hitched to him.

He invariably signed his name P. C. Roberts or P. Clayton Roberts and encouraged people to call him by his middle name or, failing in this, to at least make it "P. O." His mother was wroth at this ingratitude and frankly said so. But Percival stuck to it. He would have no Percival in his. He went further and secretly encouraged intimate friends to call him Sandy.

Then one day he changed. His mother found some new engraved cards in his room reading Percival Clayton Roberts and marveled, even while she was glad. When his father heard of it he was indignant. But Percival enlightened them not.

But Uncle William did. He viewed the situation on all sides and gave it as his opinion as an expert that there was a girl in the case—a girl who liked the name of Percival. And when Percival was asked about it he drew himself up haughtily.

"Is it necessary," he said, with the cold dignity of a man of twenty, "that my private affairs be discussed?"

"Nary a bit, Perce," said Uncle William, "nary a bit. No use to discuss 'em at all that I can see." Then he went outdoors and exploded into laughter, for Uncle William had been there and knew a few things himself.—Galveston News.

Misquotations.

A case of misquotation that has become chronic is revealed by a passage in Habakkuk. The passage really reads, "Write the vision and make it plain that he may run that readeth it." The vision was a warning and the reader was to run from danger, but Cooper misquoted it by saying, "He that runs may read," signifying that it was easily read in haste, and this version has survived.

Another instance of rewriting a quotation into something of entirely divergent meaning is afforded by the passage from Butler's "Hudibras," which really is, "He that complies against his will is of the same opinion still." Many a writer has misquoted that into "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still," as if a man that was convinced could possibly be of the same opinion as previously.

The Lowest Temperature.

It is a curious fact that the lowest atmospheric temperature ever recorded by the thermometer was at a point almost directly over the equator. A balloon equipped with a self registering instrument was sent up from the shore of Victoria Nyansa, in central Africa, and it rose to a height of twelve miles. The temperature at that height was nearly 119 degrees below zero Fahrenheit. It is possible that even greater cold might be found twelve miles above the pole, but the weight of scientific opinion is that the upper air over the torrid zone is generally colder than over the arctic regions.

Tracing a Resemblance.

"Yes," the old farmer was saying, "in some ways a pig is a good deal like a human critter. You may never have heard it before, but a pig sometimes suffers from rheumatism, same as if he was a man." "But how can you tell when a pig has rheumatism?" asked the visitor. "Oh, he does a lot of grunting over it, same as a man does."—Chicago Tribune.

The End of Romance.

She—I haven't seen you for years, fully five years, Mr. Grey. How did that little romance of yours with Miss Lillian end? He—Miss Lillian is no more. She—What! Dead? He—No; married. She—You don't say so. You are still friends, though? He—No. She married me.

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